BK
GROW YOUR BRAND WITH US.
Explore our shiny new Media Kit 2021
FIND OUT MORE

Disney's new cartoon sparks debate over "true Thai" appearance

Diversity matters.

2 YEARS AGO CITY LIVING, MOVIES

By Kawee Jarach for ASIACITY STUDIO | Jun 20, 2019

Ann Boonchuy is the Thai-American star of Disney's latest cartoon, ***Amphibia***, and Thailand's mad about it. According to some corners of the local Twittersphere, Ann doesn't look anywhere near white enough to be half Thai.

The cartoon's Thai-American creator, Matt Braly, who was also behind the hit Gravity Falls series, explained that he took inspiration from a childhood trip to Bangkok and that Ann's appearance was modeled on a picture of his grandmother in her youth. In addition, Ann is voiced by Brenda Song, a longstanding star of Disney Channel who is also Thai-Hmong-American.

Credit: Disney Channel

But, beyond the creative story and the embrace of Thai culture comes the inevitable drama, which raised its head in a controversial skin color debate.

New Disney cartoon #Amphibia has a leading Thai girl character Ann Boonchuay.

While many Thais rejoice, some have issues with Ann's dark skin. Some fear foreigners would think all Thais look "like her." This one thinks Disney should know "real" (white-skinned) luuk-kruengs. https://t.co/VNlsYkhTlS

> The deleted tweet showed Ann Boonchuay vs. the "real" luuk-krueng (mixed race) "majority". The tweeter said Ann isn't a luuk-krueng but "true Thai". pic.twitter.com/O7hlasFlzi
>
> — Kaewmala (@Thai_Talk) June 18, 2019

Though the initial tweet that @Thai_Talk refers to has since been deleted, the screenshot reads:

LEAVE A COMMENT

NEW PLACES

Tokyo Neo
RESTAURANT

Matcha Mood
RESTAURANT

Jump Master Skate Haus
VENUE

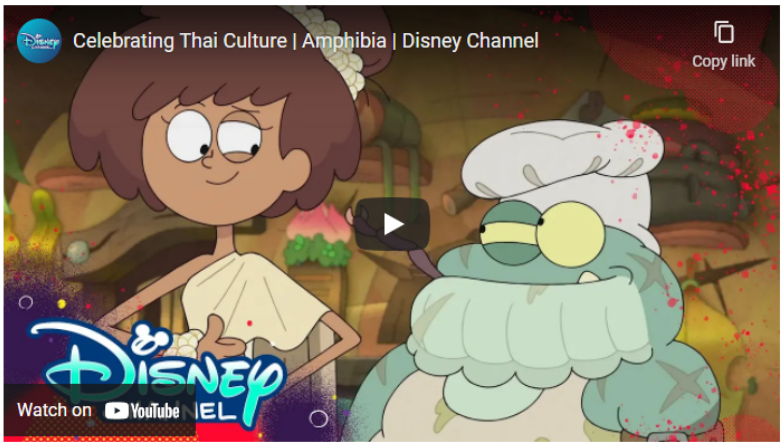
View More New Places ›

> "#Amphibia what kind of "luk krueng" (mixed-race) is she. This is definitely a 'pure' Thai look because in real life most of them [luk krueng] are more like Sririta Jensen [the Thai celeb pictured]
>
> Disney needs to know this person called Sririta
>
> The true half-caste
> #Disney #Sririta"

The derogatory remarks have sparked debate on the topic of skin color-related prejudice. Commenters on @Thai_Talk's post support Disney's inclusive depiction: "I hope the show becomes super successful and makes Thai kids think it's ok to be darker," says one, while another questions "What's the use of having another Mulan who is Thai?" "I've said this before and I'll say it again: (shouting): SKIN COLOR DOESN'T MATTER!!!" chimes another.

Could cartoons like ***Amphibia*** challenge whiteness as the universal standard of beauty? Let us know your thoughts in the comments.

Check out a preview of ***Amphibia*** from Disney Channel's YouTube:



Read more: Thailand's uphill battle to promote diversity

LATEST NEWS

Outrage as Thai schoolbook promotes dictatorship in grammar lesson

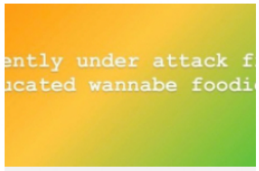
What lesson are you supposed to learn here?

3 DAYS 15 HOURS AGO
CITY LIVING

Meet the photographer reporting from the frontlines of the protests

Capturing the urban battlefield.

5 DAYS 20 HOURS AGO
CITY LIVING



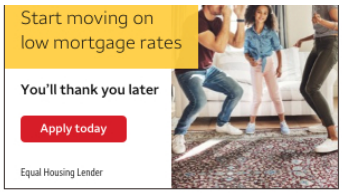
Bangkok restaurant gets grilled for roasting customers' negative feedback

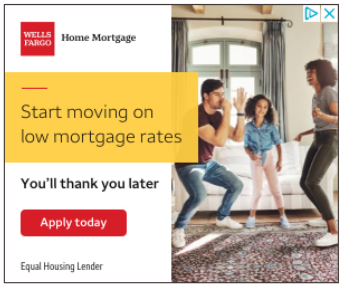
What goes around comes around.

1 WEEK 3 DAYS AGO
CITY LIVING

View All News ›

The Mandarin Oriental goes vegan for Jay Fest with special afternoon tea set
Jay Fest for the upscale crowd.
1 DAY AGO
RESTAURANTS





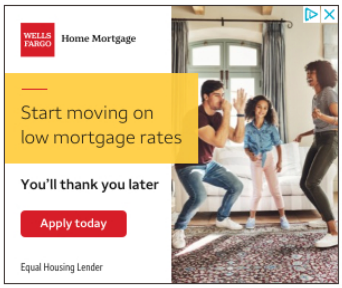


Image: Vegan and gluten-free afternoon tea / courtesy Mandarin Oriental

By Megan Leon | Oct 07, 2021

To celebrate Thailand's annual vegetarian festival, aka Jay Fest, the Mandarin Oriental is upgrading afternoon tea with one-weekend-only vegan sets.

From **Oct 9-10**, right in the thick of Jay Fest (Oct 4-13), the **Authors' Lounge** will offer a vegan and gluten-free afternoon tea set (B1,500) curated by the hotel's executive pastry chef, Pablo Gicquel.

Expect highlights like vegan protein and cheddar cheese puffs, vegan bratwurst with dijon mustard, and sweets like charcoal tarts with rice milk, matcha-yuzu cakes, and gluten-free scones with golden raisins and Granny Smith apple. Freshly brewed coffee or tea are, of course, included.

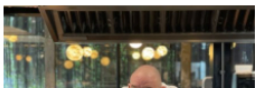
The Authors' Lounge is a destination in itself. Its old-world charm with white wicker chairs, romantic architecture, and lush greenery have made it a local-favorite for afternoon tea.

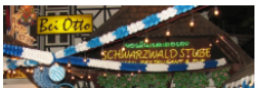
For more information, visit the hotel's website or call 02-659-9000.

Authors' Lounge, Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, 48 Oriental Ave. Open Sat-Sun 11am-7pm; afternoon tea noon-6pm.

Images courtesy of the Mandarin Oriental Bangkok

LATEST NEWS





Le Normandie's head chef departs, will open first restaurant in Bangkok

Top chef makes moves.

2 WEEKS 1 DAY AGO
RESTAURANTS

After 37 years, Bei Otto bids farewell to Sukhumvit

Auf wiedersehen, Soi 20.

2 WEEKS 2 DAYS AGO
RESTAURANTS

Chu will reopen in Phrom Phong as soon as November

Still I rise.

3 WEEKS 4 HOURS AGO
RESTAURANTS

View All News ›

All Aboard: Bill Bensley's latest project sees train cars upcycled into rooms

Trash into treasure.

3 DAYS AGO TRAVEL